GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5515
ANSWERED ON:16.05.2007
PROMOTION OF HEALTHCARE TOURISM
Madhwaraj Smt. Manorama

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has agreed with many States to promote healthcare tourism causing a drain on scarce Medicare infrastructure in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether private investments in Medicare sector will provide service to the rich and elite at the cost of the poor and the needy?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) to (c): Many States are promoting themselves as destinations for Health Tourism. These focus primarily on the rejuvenating techniques of Indian Systems of Medicine especially of Ayurveda. Specialized medical health care facilities available in the private sector in India are also being used by patients from foreign countries. The influx of tourists to such States generates increased demands for these services resulting in creation of additional infrastructure, employment generation, development of man-power and building up of foreign exchange reserves. Private investment in the Health Sector is made primarily on market considerations except the investment made by the charitable and philanthropic institutions/ organizations. Despite this, the private sector plays an important role in providing basic health care services in the country. Notwithstanding the above, the Government is committed to increasing expenditure in health sector from current level of 0.9% of GDP to 2-3% of GDP over the next five years through the National Rural Health Mission to improve basic health care services for the common man.